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President Clinton Announces Cloning Prohibition Act of 1997

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S	30	6	7	2

For Immediate Release

June 9, 1997

TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES:

I am pleased to transmit today for immediate consideration and prompt enactment the "Cloning Prohibition Act of 1997." This legislative proposal would prohibit any attempt to create a human being using somatic cell nuclear transfer technology, the method that was used to create Dolly the sheep. This proposal will also provide for further review of the ethical and scientific issues associated with the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer in human beings.

Following the February report that a sheep had been successfully cloned using a new technique, I requested my National Bioethics Advisory Commission to examine the ethical and legal implications of applying the same cloning technology to human beings. The Commission concluded that at this time "it is morally unacceptable for anyone in the public or private sector, whether in a research or clinical setting, to attempt to create a child using somatic cell nuclear transfer cloning" and recommended that Federal legislation be enacted to prohibit such activities. I agree with the Commission's conclusion and am transmitting this legislative proposal to implement its recommendation.

Various forms of cloning technology have been used for decades resulting in important biomedical and agricultural advances. Genes, cells, tissues, and even whole plants and animals have been cloned to develop new therapies for treating such disorders as cancer, diabetes, and cystic fibrosis. Cloning technology also holds promise for producing replacement skin, cartilage, or bone tissue for burn or accident victims, and nerve tissue to treat spinal cord injury. Therefore, nothing in the "Cloning Prohibition Act of 1997" restricts activities in other areas of biomedical and agricultural research that involve: (1) the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer or other cloning

technologies to clone molecules, DNA, cells, and tissues; or (2) the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer techniques to create animals.

The Commission recommended that such legislation provide for further review of the state of somatic cell nuclear transfer technology and the ethical and social issues attendant to its potential use to create human beings. My legislative proposal would implement this recommendation and assign responsibility for the review, to be completed in the fifth year after passage of the legislation, to the National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

I urge the Congress to give this legislation prompt and favorable consideration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

THE WHITE HOUSE,
June 9, 1997.

PRESIDENT CLINTON ANNOUNCES CLONING PROHIBITION ACT OF 1997

June 9, 1997

Today at the White House, President Clinton will receive the National Bioethics Advisory Commission's report on human cloning and transmit to Congress the "Cloning Prohibition Act of 1997." This legislative proposal would implement the Commission's key recommendation for legislation to prohibit any attempt to create a human being using somatic cell nuclear transfer technology. The President will be joined in the Rose Garden by the Vice President and Commission Chairman Dr. Harold Shapiro.

The National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) Report

President Clinton today accepts the NBAC's report on the possible cloning of human beings. In February, following reports of the successful cloning of a sheep, the President asked the NBAC to review the profound ethical issues raised by the possible cloning of human beings. Today, Dr. Harold Shapiro, Chair of the Commission and President of Princeton University, formally presented the report to the President.

The Commission found unanimously that it is morally unacceptable for anyone to attempt to create a child with the technology used to create Dolly the sheep. The NBAC reported that attempting to create a child using so-called somatic cell nuclear transfer cloning would pose great risks to the child and raise other ethical issues needing further discussion. The NBAC called for a moratorium on the use of the technique in humans.

The Commission also found that the new technology may have many agricultural and medical benefits, including the development of medicines, therapies for diseases such as cancer, cystic fibrosis, and diabetes, and prospects for repair and regeneration of human tissues. The NBAC concluded that the cloning of DNA, cells, tissues, and non-human animals --using somatic cell nuclear transfer and other cloning techniques --is not ethically problematic when conducted in compliance with existing regulations and guidelines.

Cloning Prohibition Act of 1997

Acting on the Commission's key recommendation, President Clinton announced legislation banning the use of the new technology to clone human beings. Consistent with the NBAC's recommendation, the President's legislative proposal prohibits for five years the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer to create a human being and directs the NBAC to report to the President in four and a half years on whether to continue the ban. The proposal is carefully worded to ensure that it will not interfere with beneficial biomedical and agricultural activities.

Further Actions By The President

As recommended by the NBAC, President Clinton today also:

- **Reaffirms that no Federal funds will be used to clone human beings.**
The President stated that the prohibition he put in place in March will remain in effect while his proposed legislation is pending.
- **Urges privately funded scientists and clinicians to adhere to the voluntary moratorium he called for in March.** The President asked these professionals to work through their societies and associations to ensure that all adhere to the current voluntary ban while his proposed legislation is pending.
- **Pledges to work with other countries to enforce the prohibition.** Several other countries, including Great Britain, Denmark, Germany, Australia, and Spain, have banned human cloning.